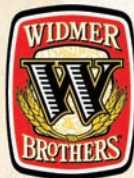
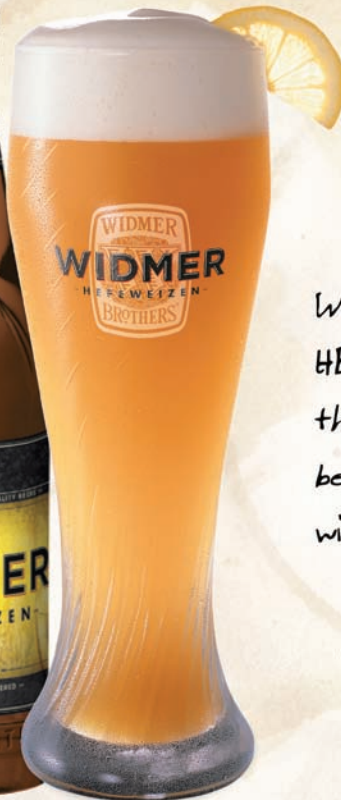


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HOP AND POP

Welcome to Bar Fly: The Guardian Guide to Local Drinking. We haven't even started yet, and already I need a cocktail. Oh look, there's one right here. *Convenient.* That's the first step to a great night out: finding a delicious libation near at hand. The second step? Knowing where to jet if the pour at your first stop is weak. With that in mind (as well as the itch to dance and the munchies afterward), we decided to map some of our favorite local bars, dance clubs, and late-night eateries in one handy guide, suitable for slipping into your barhopping back pocket. Bottoms up — and don't forget your adorable designated driver or friendly, available cabbie!

Marke B., Bar Fly editor
marke@sfbg.com

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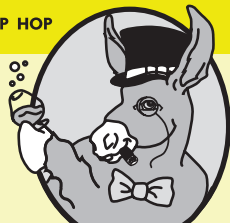
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SPEC'S

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IBARS WE LOVE

What makes a bar great? Is it the crowd, the music, the drink selection, the location, or merely the willingness of that certain hottie to take your number? Bar beauty is all in the highball glass of the beholder, of course. One watering hole may never be able to please everybody, but here are a few that we think are definitely worth a try.

ALEMBIC BAR

Some of the boldest cocktails in town are shaken or stirred behind the tiny bar here. It seems bitters, Benedictine, and Chartreuse are slipped into most of the drinks. The shelves at the back (and many concoctions) are laden with a grand

assortment of hard-to-find whiskeys. Don't overlook the beer selection, either — the stuff on tap comes from Magnolia Brewery down the street.

1725 Haight, SF. (415) 666-0822, www.alembicbar.com

BERETTA

Beretta maintains a fragile balance between a too-busy bar and a friendly restaurant where you can get complicated and wonderful drinks made by some of the city's finest mixologists. Many people come for the cocktails but stay for the food, as the affordable and delicious dishes are served nearly as fast as the drink orders.

1199 Valencia, SF. (415) 695-1199, www.berettasf.com

BIG FOUR RESTAURANT

Named for the four notorious railroad tycoons of the late 1800s, filled with historic photos and memorabilia, and appointed with forest green leather chairs and a live pianist, this bar and lounge in the Huntington is the perfect place to drink an Old Fashioned surrounded by old money in old-world opulence. Recession be damned!

1075 California, SF. (415) 771-1140

www.huntingtonhotel.com

BOURBON AND BRANCH

For all the rigmarole of the secret password and the hidden entrance, B and B is really just a beautiful bar that takes reservations like a restaurant, although the speakeasy vibe certainly adds a thrill. Inside there's an old-school library environment, a vintage jazz soundtrack, well-dressed singles on the prowl, and cocktails of the highest order.

501 Jones, SF. (415) 346-1735

www.bourbonandbranch.com

BROKEN RECORD

Located in the much-overlooked Excelsior District, Broken Record's a roomy dive bar that serves gourmet game sausage, PBRs, and hard-edged whiskey drinks. Despite its rocker clientele, it's not afraid to drop the attitude and get down with a goofy night of beer pong, a bar-wide foosball match, and occasional freebies.

1166 Geneva, SF. (415) 255-3100

www.brokenrecordsf.com

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CANTINA

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BAIRS WE LOVE

continued...

CAFÉ FLOR

Castro without all the fussiness: Flor's large, cherished, plant-filled patio offers one of the best people-watching spots in its still mostly-gay neighborhood, as well as a great menu, fabulous theme nights, an enormously popular brunch, and much occasion for relaxed conversation.

2298 Market, SF. (415) 621-8579, www.cafeflore.com

CANTINA

Nothing about this cozy gem — not the hard-to-find yet convenient location, nor the casual yet friendly bartenders and random crowd, nor the occasional DJ spinning hip-hop at the end of the bar — immediately indicates that Cantina is serving the most exciting Latin spirit-focused cocktails in town. Oh, but it is, it is.

580 Sutter, SF. (415) 398-0195, www.cantinasf.com

EAGLE TAVERN

The Eagle's a gay leather biker bar in theory and sometimes in practice, but between the supercheap Thursday night live rock shows, the all-you-can-drink (for charity!) Sunday afternoon beer busts, and one of the best outdoor fire pit-equipped patios available, everybody flies into the Eagle eventually.

398 12th St., SF. (415) 626-0880, www.sfeagle.com

83 PROOF

Snazzy yet unpretentious, spacious yet comfy, downtown yet uptown — 83 Proof is a two-storied favorite that boasts some of the most knowledgeable staff we've come across. The basil gimlets are notorious for their kick, but the Manhattans and sazeracs served here are equally up to snuff. Pop in for a quickie after a late lunch.

83 First St., SF. (415) 296-8383, www.83proof.com

FLORA

Flora is a gorgeous art deco restaurant located near the flower market — hence the name

— in downtown Oakland, which has significantly upped its delicious cocktail selection. The fantastic tequila-based Carter Beats the Devil concoction alone is worth some quality time, especially if you can snag a seat to sit and sip.

1900 Telegraph, Oakl. (510) 286-0100

GITANE

Sultry and seductive as the gypsy lady that gives this restaurant its name, the lavish-yet-Lilliputian bar at Gitane is a fine place to canoodle with someone special, feed each other the famous

CONTINUES ON PAGE 10 »



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GITANE

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BARS WE LOVE

continued...

bacon bonbons, and order the rich Spanish brandy- and sherry-based cocktails that are its specialty.

6 Claude Lane, SF. (415) 788-6686

www.gitanerestaurant.com

HOTEL BIRON

Not a hotel at all but an intimate, brick-walled, and too-romantic wine bar tucked away on a small, shadowy street, Biron feels like a secret you weren't supposed to be let in on. The international wine list is heavy on the reds and there are light snacks available, but all your nibbling may be on your date.

45 Rose, SF. (415) 703-0403, www.hotelbiron.com

LA TRAPPE CAFÉ

La Trappe is one of several recently opened venues specializing in Belgian brews, but it comes with a staggering 20 varieties on tap and more than 100 in bottles. This underground (literally) bar is a mashup of an ultra-lounge and a mess hall, where patrons sit on repurposed church pews.

800 Greenwich, SF. (415) 440-8727

www.latrappecafe.com

LE COLONIAL

A former Trader Vic's, this huge-but-hidden restaurant switched the decor and menu from tiki

to French Vietnamese, but retained a sophisticated tropical atmosphere with rattan furnishings, oriental rugs, and ceiling fans. Though DJs and other musicians entertain in the lounge at night, the roomy veranda makes for one of the busiest happy hour spots in the field.

20 Cosmo Pl., SF. (415) 931-3600

www.lecolonialsf.com

LEXINGTON CLUB

This is your standard Mission District corner bar with a wooden floor and chairs, pool table, jukebox, happy hour specials, and the occasional DJ night. The only thing that stands out is the crowd: indie girls who like indie girls love the Lex, the only full-time, long-term lesbian bar in San Francisco.

3464 19th St., SF. (415) 863-2052

www.lexingtonclub.com

MINT KARAOKE LOUNGE

At this karaoke bar the songs are performed pitch-perfectly and all too seriously by some regulars — and as comedy routines by others. This mixed bag of talent and lack thereof makes for a riotous evening out at the Mint, even if you never have the courage (or enough cocktails) to sing a note. Plus, you can order sushi from the joint next door.

1942 Market, SF. (415) 626-4726, www.themint.net

CONTINUES ON PAGE 12 »



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BARs WE LOVE

continued...

NOPA

At this big and busy restaurant with much room devoted to the bar, the cocktail menu rotates regularly and the drinks on it are mixes of exotic spirits like genever and pisco with home-made ingredients including bitters and shrubs, formed into clever culinary twists on familiar cocktails.

560 Divisadero, SF. (415) 864-8643, www.nopasf.com

PARK CHALET

This touristy-yet-pleasant brew pub on the backside of the Beach Chalet restaurant has tall glass windows on all sides looking over a sunny lawn sheltered from the ocean winds. Indoors a fireplace keeps you cozy on cold nights, with acoustic bands and drink specials bringing in the locals.

1000 Great Highway, SF. (415) 386-8439
www.parkchalet.com

SPEC'S TWELVE ADLER MUSEUM CAFÉ

When your book club finishes *Moby Dick*, this is the place to discuss it. With funky maritime detritus adorning the walls, ample shared tables, and crackers and cheese cut from a giant wheel for sale, Spec's is the perfect North Beach bar to pull up to for five-hour stretches of heady discussion.

12 William Saroyan Place, SF. (415) 421-4112

TONGA ROOM

This grand Polynesian escapist wonderland in the Fairmont Hotel has a lake in the middle of the restaurant with a floating band and a regular rainstorm descending from the ceiling. The tiki drinks and food are less thrilling than the magnificent ambience, so go during the happy hour buffet (weekdays, 5–7 p.m.) and make the most of it.

950 Mason, SF. (415) 772-5278, www.tongaroom.com

VESUVIO

This former Beat poet hangout next to City Lights Bookstore may be slightly worn from the 60 years it's been open — but that only adds to the only-in-San Francisco charm. Vesuvio's a two-story, wood-detailed, art- and knickknack-packed bar in which you should bring a book, have a beer, and blow off your workday.

255 Columbus, SF (415) 362-3370
www.vesuvio.com

ZEITGEIST

On sunny summer Sunday afternoons, seemingly every tattoo-sporting punk and/or hipster in the city is angling for a spot on a bench at one of the dozens of picnic tables in the big beer garden outside this small bar. Go any day of the week and pick up a pitcher and a burger, and start a party of your own.

199 Valencia, SF. (415) 255-7505
www.myspace.com/zeitgeistsf



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TORONADO

GUARDIAN PHOTO BY MATT REAMER

SPECIALTY BARS

Some bars are good at all kinds of things. These bars are fiercely dedicated to being good at just one.

BAR 888

Grappa, or grape-based brandy, is maligned by some as tasting like “rocket fuel,” but at this InterContinental Hotel lobby bar and restaurant there are dozens of delectable varieties — and cocktails featuring them — to prove the naysayers wrong.

*888 Howard, SF. (415) 616-6566
www.grappabar888.com*

DOSA ON FILLMORE

Most of the tastiest cocktail bars in San Francisco favor gin over vodka, but Dosa does singularly creative work with it. You'll find gin paired with Darjeeling tea cordial, coconut milk, curried nectar, and other choice natural ingredients.

1700 Fillmore, SF. (415) 441-3672, www.dosasf.com

HOBSON'S CHOICE

Hobson's, a funky Victorian-style saloon, always has three rum punches ready to serve, and more than 100 rums available for sipping. Some varieties are simple flavors better left shaken into cocktails, but a hefty handful of others are rare treats to find by the glass.

1601 Haight, SF. (415) 621-5859
www.hobsonschoice.com

NIHON WHISKY LOUNGE

Trendy among the well-dressed adventurous, this joint probably doesn't have the largest whiskey selection in San Francisco, but it certainly serves up the most original combination: Nihon pairs its cocktails with izakaya-style Japanese food.

1779 Folsom, SF. (415) 552-4400, www.nihon-sf.com

PISCO LATIN LOUNGE

This violet-lit bar features a large amount of its namesake spirit, pisco — a Peruvian or Chilean brandy — and delicious Brazilian cachaça. Enjoy them both in custom cocktails or sip your way through selections by the bottle.

1817 Market, SF. (415) 874-9951, www.piscosf.com

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NIHON WHISKY LOUNGE

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SPECIALTY BARS

continued...

TOMMY'S MEXICAN RESTAURANT

Tommy's serves nearly 300 tequilas, all 100 percent agave, and offers a tequila-tasting-club card as a systematic way to try them all. The bar has about 10 stools, but the attached restaurant will hold you as long as you can hold your liquor.

5929 Geary, SF. (415) 387-4747

www.tommymexican.com

TORONADO

Orders can be filled with a scowl from surly servers here, but the 50 rotating brews on tap, offbeat special events, and a warmly rowdy Lower Haight crowd makes Toronado's the premier beer bar in the city.

547 Haight, SF. (415) 863-2276

www.toronado.com

TSUNAMI SUSHI AND SAKE

Tsunami stocks a solid selection of sake available by the glass, bottle, or mixed into exotic cocktails. Although it's a tad expensive here, the sexy crowd and fun atmosphere help offset the cost.

1300 Fulton, SF. (415) 567-7664

www.dajanigroup.net

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CONNECTICUT YANKEE

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MARTINI BARS

A martini served in a dive bar just doesn't taste the same as it does somewhere more devoted to this special libation. Here are some of our favorite places to throw back a cold one.

AUB ZAM ZAM

San Francisco used to be home to dozens of unpretentious neighborhood cocktail bars, many of which closed or were sold, sadly, during the rebirth of the cocktail craze. Persian-themed Aub Zam Zam hasn't

changed much since those days, which is a good thing in our book.

1633 Haight, SF. (415) 861-2545

BIX

At jazz supper club Bix, they've been making proper martinis since long before the recent revival in small, chilled glassware — shaken or stirred by venerable old barmen or tableside for diners by waiters in white jackets.

56 Gold, SF. (415) 433-6300

www.bixrestaurant.com

BOULEVARD

Pricey but pristine restaurant Boulevard is that perfect place to take the company president (when she's paying) for a three-martini power lunch. Usually spots like this aren't big on cocktail innovation, but the other drinks on the list are worth trying too.

1 Mission, SF. (415) 543-6084
www.boulevardrestaurant.com

CONNECTICUT YANKEE

"Vermouth is for cream soups," says Steve Denever, bartender at this publike establishment and creator of the Potrero Hill Martini, with — you guessed it — no vermouth. Shaken, never stirred, and with trademark ice shavings on the top, this doozy is definitely worth a guzzle or three.

100 Connecticut, SF. (415) 552-4440
www.theyankee.com

HARRY DENTON'S STARLIGHT ROOM

Whether during its DJ nights, drag brunches, or any time in between, there's nothing like a top-shelf martini at this top-floor Sir Francis Drake Hotel bar, with a magnificent view of the city to make you feel on top of the world.

450 Powell, SF. (415) 395-8595
www.harrydenton.com

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MARTUNI'S

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MARTINI BARS

continued...

LONE PALM

Some nights it can feel like just another small bar, but when your timing is perfect, when everybody finds a seat at a candlelit table and is having civilized fun over classic drinks, you realize this place achieves natural brilliance.

3394 22nd St., SF. (415) 648-0109
www.lonepalmbars.com

MARTUNI'S

A plush mid-Market piano bar that accommodates vocally expressive patrons and serves a crowd of upscale gays and glowing post-work partiers, Martuni's is known for its Big Gulp—size martinis that'll have you singing along in no time.

4 Valencia, SF. (415) 241-0205

MAXFIELD'S PIED PIPER BAR

Tucked into the Palace Hotel and named after the specially commissioned Maxfield Parrish mural that hangs above it, the Piper celebrates the 100th anniversary of its post-quake reopening this year. It also serves a mean classic with gin.

2 New Montgomery, SF. (415) 512-1111
www.sfpalace.com



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PUBS AND SPORTS BARS

Forget vying for hipster accolades or bridge-and-tunnel hotspot-of-the-week status. These places just want you to settle in and either watch the game or linger over a cold one — or both.

GIORDANO BROS.

You can't call yourself a *real* Steelers fan if you haven't been to this North Beach bastion of

all things Pittsburgh — all-in-one sandwiches, bottled beers shipped in from Pennsylvania, and, of course, sports. Just don't tell anyone you're from Cleveland.

303 Columbus, SF. (415) 397-2767

www.giordanobros.com

GREENS SPORTS BAR

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televisions, and walls covered in every team pennant imaginable, Greens could be San Francisco's quintessential sports bar. Choose your game, grab a drink, and wait for food to be delivered from a local restaurant. Score!
2239 Polk, SF. (415) 775-4287

HORSESHOE TAVERN

The 'Shoe's been serving 'em up for 75 years — since long before the Marina was, well, *the Marina*. Sass, charm, and down-home fun — plus a big-screen TV — still shine at this beloved watering hole that brings together laidback folks from the neighborhood.

2024 Chestnut, SF. (415) 346-1430
www.horseshoetavernsf.com

KEZAR PUB

What sets this place apart from other sports bars, aside from its convenient location across from Kezar Stadium and around the corner from the Upper Haight, is its full food menu and multiple TVs transmitting multiple sports. Oh, and the friendly, festive fans. During World Cup madness, you don't want to be anywhere else.

770 Stanyan, SF. (415) 386-9292

LITTLE SHAMROCK

The Shamrock's well-worn interior and odd 19th-century memorabilia advertises its history as one of the city's oldest taprooms. And reasonable prices, comfortable seating, and lots of happy regulars makes it a perpetual

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24 Hour


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HORSESHOE TAVERN

GUARDIAN PHOTO BY MATT REAMER

PUBS AND SPORTS BARS

continued...

favorite — even beyond St. Patrick's Day.
807 Lincoln Way, SF. (415) 661-0060

MAD DOG IN THE FOG

Irish bartenders and dark wood paneling give this Lower Haight gem the feel of a hang-out for European ex-pats as opposed to an American frat-boy magnet. And serving only beer and wine seems to keep the patrons pleasantly in check, whether they're watching soccer, shooting pool, or playing pop trivia.
530 Haight, SF. (415) 626-7279

MONAGHAN'S

If the Cubs are playing, you can catch them here — along with sweet daily deals on beer and liquor. Plus, the crowd tends to be delightfully mixed, since they have Midwestern roots rather than Marina addresses in common.
3259 Pierce, SF. (415) 567-4466
www.monaghanssf.com

PLOUGH AND STARS

Arguably the Inner Richmond's favorite Irish dive, this spacious establishment is great for a perfectly-poured Guinness, a game of pool, and an evening of live (often Irish) music — all in pleasantly diverse company.
116 Clement, SF. (415) 751-1122
www.theploughandstars.com



WWW.SFGRUBSTAKE.COM

2239 Polk (at Green St.) • (415)775-4287



DANCE CLUBS

Even better than drinking? Drinking and dancing. Even better than drinking and dancing? Well, that's another guide, entirely — but you can start with the dancing part at these floor-pounding joints.

ATMOSPHERE

North Beach is more known for its strip clubs, Italian restaurants, and sometimes rowdy college crowds than as a destination for hoofing, but this well-appointed spot may up the neighborhood's dance floor rep. The Russian-themed parties are a hoot, and the mainstream quotient of the crowd is nicely balanced out by some killer electro and techno tunes.

447 Broadway, SF. (415) 788-4623
www.a3atmosphere.com

DNA LOUNGE

Mashup madness, industrial nights that serve raw meat, circus-burlesque parties, drag king pageants, goth proms — one thing's for sure, there's something for almost everyone at this large club. Your wardrobe may not have enough wild versatility to survive a full week of parties here.

375 11th St., SF. (415) 626-1409
www.dnalounge.com

ENDUP

A San Francisco afterhours classic that's seen its share of changes over the years, it still exudes one of the most welcoming vibes, to all sorts of party people, that you're likely to find anywhere.

Fast-paced dance music is the usual order of the night, but special occasions make way for reggae, minimal techno, and good old-fashioned house as well.

401 Sixth St., SF. (415) 896-1095, www.theendup.com

INFUSION

Whoa, this place is fancy. The new kid on the nightlife block — it just opened in January — Infusion has yet to find its voice either musically or crowd-wise. But a trip just to check out the interior has its rewards: there's 6,000 square feet of exquisitely laid out, Hong Kong-influenced loveliness, including a fire-tongued waterfall and a hologram over the bar.

124 Ellis, SF. (415) 421-8700, www.infusionlounge.com

MIGHTY

Nightlifers with an ear cocked for the cream of the dance music crop find their way to Mighty's industrial neighborhood location. The club's interior is as attractive as that of any other place deemed fancy, but the music programming, which includes both the rapturously electronic and adventurously experimental, makes one forget about all that and just dance.

119 Utah, SF. (415) 626-7001, www.mighty119.com

PARADISE LOUNGE

The Paradise used to be known for its rock shows, of which there are still a few, but after a total reboot at the end of last year, it's now giving some of the bigger dance clubs a run for their money, with a neo-disco feel, plenty

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*we would like to remind you that it is illegal to ride under the influence in the state of CA so keep it under 0.08%

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TEMPLE

GUARDIAN PHOTOS BY ARLENE ROMANA

DANCE CLUBS

continued...

of friendly staff, and a very refreshing openness to promoter experimentation.

1501 Folsom, SF. (415) 252-5017, www.paradisesf.com

THE STUD

Queer people have been flocking to this SoMa stalwart for decades — it's even name-checked in *Milk* with a whinny of delight. Nowadays it plays host to a wide, wide variety of drag shows and dance parties that reveal one of the truest faces of SF. Even if that face is covered in cheap mascara.

399 Ninth St., SF. (415) 863-6623, www.studsf.com

TEMPLE

A beautifully designed labyrinth of a space whose decor is meant to evoke a vision of alien archeologists digging up a mythological ancient civilization, Temple attracts spiffy regulars with smooth house, deep techno, hip-hop, and a calendar of green-minded benefits.

540 Howard, SF. www.templessf.com

1015 FOLSOM

Say what you will (and we will) about the grabby crowds and playa-wannabes that sometimes gum up 1015's works — this multilevel after-hours wonderland draws the biggest names in dance music, and the new "underground" branding of its basement, 103 Harriet, shows that it hasn't left intelligent clubbers behind.

1015 Folsom, SF. www.1015.com

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ISLAND CAFÉ

GUARDIAN PHOTO BY RORY McNAMARA

LATE-NIGHT DINING

What do students, insomniacs, drunks, stoners, and nightclub workers have in common? A late-night appetite. Lucky for us, San Francisco has plenty of night owl options serving a variety of cuisines.

GRUBSTAKE

California's Gold host Huell Howser likes this place for its unique Portuguese menu and

its historic rail car locale. Everyone else likes cooked-to-order burgers and breakfasts, all available every day until 4 a.m.

1525 Pine, SF. (415) 673-8268
www.sfgrubstake.com

ISLAND CAFÉ

It's hard to find good Hawaiian food stateside. Island Café not only serves it up, but stays

open 24 hours a day to do so. That means you can get all the Spam, eggs, macaroni salad, and Hawaiian BBQ you want, no matter what time it is in Honolulu.

901 Taraval, SF. (415) 661-3303
www.sfislandcafe.com

LUCKY PENNY

By capturing an honest diner-geist that Denny's only contrives with effort, this Laurel Heights joint pleases the late-night crowd with a friendly staff and a full menu of diner fare, including a fabulous grilled cheese sandwich for under five bucks.

2670 Geary, SF. (415) 921-0836

NAAN-N-CURRY

This Bay Area chain serves decent Indian fare at cheap prices. Even better? Food — and self-serve chai — is available 24 hours a day at the Jackson and O'Farrell locations. Enjoy the energetic electro-bhangra tunes, and be sure to wash the curry smell out of your hair the next morning.

533 Jackson; 642 Irving; 336 O'Farrell;
690 Van Ness, SF; 2366 Telegraph, Berk.

OSHA THAI

Sick of diner food as your only post-bar option? Try authentic Thai cuisine with a fresh,

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GRUBSTAKE

GUARDIAN PHOTO BY RORY McNAMARA

LATE-NIGHT DINING

continued...

modern twist at one of this eatery's six locations — including a kitchen on Geary that's totally hopping until 3 a.m. The name means “delicious.” Perfect.

696 Geary; 819 Valencia; 149 Second St.;
4 Embarcadero; 2033 Union; 2922 Diamond; SF.
www.oshathai.com

PINECREST

Pinecrest slings standard greasy spoon fare in a gritty, unassuming atmosphere at all hours of the night. The trip to the bathroom might be a bit scary, but not as scary as the hangover you'd get if you went to bed hungry. Another plus: hilariously drunk tourists staggering in from their first night out in San Francisco.

401 Geary, SF. (415) 885-6407

SPARKY'S

As good for people watching as it is for all-night dining, Sparky's offers a mind-numbing selection of breakfast, lunch, dinner, and dessert options — and is hipster-conveniently located between the Mission and the Castro. An upbeat atmosphere (even at 4 a.m.) makes up for prices that can be a bit steep. Plus, *they deliver*.

242 Church, SF. (415) 626-8666

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